



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Housing and
Economic Development

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Contact:

Ryan Boehm (HED) ryan.f.boehm@mass.gov



Baker-Polito Administration Announces \$2.1 Million MassWorks Infrastructure Award in Montague

*Grant will fund restoration of historic pedestrian bridge, add water
and sewer capability for mill redevelopment*



MONTAGUE – Dec. 17, 2019 – Today, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy joined Town Administrator Steven Ellis, Senator Joanne

Comerford, Representative Natalie Blais, and other local leaders to announce a MassWorks Infrastructure Program grant of \$2.1 million for Montague. The project will restore and update a historic 1912 pedestrian bridge in the Turner Falls Canal District, adding connectivity for pedestrians of all abilities and adding water and sewer upgrades to facilitate development in six former mill sites in the district.

The pedestrian bridge has been out of service since 2017 due to structural failure. The MassWorks project will add new sidewalks to enhance pedestrian circulation and ADA connectivity, and provide a water main and sanitary sewer forced mains located under the bridge to provide necessary utility connections over the Power Canal. These improvements are necessary to support current and future commercial sites within the Canal District.

“MassWorks is a valuable program that maximizes return on investment for capital funding, delivering vital infrastructure repairs that improve public safety while stimulating local and private development, job growth and housing production,” **said Governor Charlie Baker.** “We will continue to collaborate closely with local leaders to identify opportunities and target public resources toward the growth and wellbeing of communities across the Commonwealth.”

“As former municipal leaders, Governor Baker and I know firsthand the value of flexible grant programs like MassWorks, which help communities make targeted enhancements and provide opportunities for economic development,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito.** “Today’s award will not only restore a historic Montague landmark, but will provide vital water and sewer service essential to future development in the Turner Falls District.”

“This administration recognizes the importance of reliable, modern infrastructure to the safety and success of communities of all sizes,” **said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy.** “These MassWorks funds to the Town of Montague will make necessary infrastructure upgrades in the Turner Falls Canal District, unlocking new commercial development at this sprawling former mill site that will benefit the entire region.”

Turners Falls is identified in the Franklin County Regional Plan for Sustainable Development as a priority economic development area that could grow into a major

employment area for the region. It is a historic industrial landscape comprised of six former mill sites that have suffered decline and two catastrophic mill fires. These improvements are necessary to support commercial sites within the Canal District, including existing tenants, and two mill properties with a combined 155,887 square feet of commercial space that will be redeveloped into a cultivation facility, a cidery, and a 500-person event space. The entire site requires pedestrian connections to parking, a bike path, and downtown as well as upgraded public water and sewer connections to ensure sustainability. The larger project is within the town's designated Opportunity Zone and will leverage \$10 million in private investment, generate 170 jobs and contribute to Montague's Turners Falls Downtown Livability Plan.

"The Canal District Gateway Improvement Project is critical to Montague's plan to revitalize what was once the centerpiece of our local economy," **said Montague Town Administrator Steven Ellis**. "The state's MassWorks investment will establish essential conditions for success in our Canal District, catalyzing private investment and new economic opportunity in our region. We are deeply grateful and wholly committed to realizing the promise of this project."

"Montague's tenacious town officials are doing all of the right things to redevelop the Canal District into a bustling culture hub, and EOHED has stepped up to work hand in glove with the town," **said Senator Joanne Comerford**. "I'm thrilled that Montague is receiving this funding to replace the 5th Street Pedestrian Bridge, and I'm eager to partner with the town and the state as we take the next steps to further economic and cultural development in Montague."

"I have no doubt that these funds will yield a tremendous return on investment by fueling economic development in this vibrant downtown," **said Representative Natalie Blais**. "I am enormously grateful to the Commonwealth for its support of this important project and want to recognize the Town of Montague for their longstanding efforts that got us to this point."

Through the 2019 MassWorks round, the Baker-Polito Administration will award more than \$72 million in MassWorks awards to a diverse mix of 36 projects in 35 communities across the Commonwealth, including nine Gateway Cities and eight communities that will receive MassWorks funding for the first time. The awards will unlock a total of \$2.3 billion in private investment and more than 4,600 new full-time

jobs, along with more than 3,100 new housing units, more than a third of which are affordable, building on the Administration's efforts to tackle the ongoing housing shortage through complementary programs like [historic funding for affordable housing](#) and the proposed [Housing Choice legislation](#). The transformative projects funded by the 2019 awards were selected from 92 applications, totaling \$223 million in requests.

Since 2015, the Baker-Polito Administration has awarded more than \$456 million in MassWorks grants to support 219 shovel-ready projects in 141 communities. MassWorks funding has leveraged over \$9.2B in private investments and made possible the creation of more than 14,000 new housing units and tens of thousands of construction and permanent jobs.

Governor Baker signed economic development legislation in August 2018 that included substantial new funding for municipalities, including another \$250 million for MassWorks awards. The legislation built on the Baker-Polito Administration's work to partner with communities to catalyze economic development and create new opportunities for residents across the Commonwealth, including the [2016 Job Creation and Workforce Development act](#), which authorized \$1 billion to support economic development efforts across the state, including a \$500 million authorization for the MassWorks Infrastructure Program, enhanced tools and the introduction of new strategies for job-readiness efforts.

Learn more about MassWorks [here](#).

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Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development

1 Ashburton Place, Room 2101, Boston, MA 02108

(617) 788-3610

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